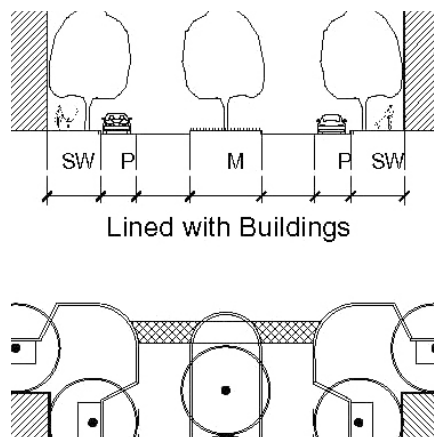
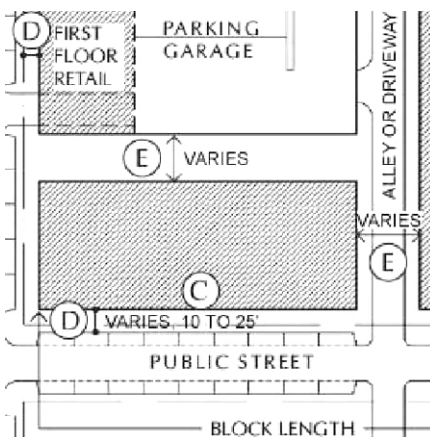


PRELIMINARY DRAFT

THE COLUMBIA DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Design Guidelines



prepared by

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THE COLUMBIA DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Chapter 3

Design Guidelines

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This *Preliminary Draft* of the Columbia Downtown Design Guidelines was prepared by the Department of Planning and Zoning based on a preliminary framework document and illustrations provided by Design Collective, Inc. Revisions to the documents respond to Focus Group and public comments. Detailed professional review by Focus Group architects and comments from Columbia Downtown planners, architects and landscape architects also contributed to the revision.

DPZ expects to revise this document several times as it goes through the public review process. Certain issues and questions that need additional analysis prior to the next draft are *highlighted in italics* in the text.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

These Guidelines establish criteria for land development in order to:

1. Ensure fulfillment of the charrette vision and the desired urban character through the design and placement of new buildings, streets and public spaces.
2. Create high quality streetscapes by using buildings to form a pleasant, convenient and safe environment designed equally for pedestrians and motorists.
3. Reduce car travel demand by focusing growth in appropriate locations and providing connections to destinations through a network of local streets.
4. Provide a measure of predictability to property owners and stakeholders on what may be built on their land or adjacent property, while allowing for flexibility so that the mixture of land uses and housing options may evolve in response to market factors.

The Design Guidelines serve to define the physical and visual characteristics of development in Downtown and the design criteria and methods that will help create a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use Downtown.

APPLICABILITY OF THE GUIDELINES

Although the Design Guidelines do not specify that redevelopment counts as new development, it should be understood that all redevelopment must comply with the Design Guidelines. Existing development does not have to comply until it is proposed for expansion or redevelopment. The Mall was not shown within any district in the Vision Plan, but will be added in the next draft of these guidelines. The process for plan submission, review and approval (including presubmission community meetings) will be included in the draft amendments to the Zoning Regulations and, when finalized, will also be described in the next draft of these Guidelines.

The Design Guidelines apply to all development within the boundaries of the Downtown Study Area. Howard County will review all development applications and determine their consistency with these Design Guidelines. All applicable Howard County regulations and approval processes must be adhered to, including review and approval by the Planning Board as required by the NT (New Town) District Zoning Regulations.

(Which criteria are requirements and which are recommendations remains a subject for discussion.) Throughout the Design Guidelines, the use of the word “shall” indicates a requirement or criteria which must be adhered to, unlike phrases containing the words “may,” “should,” etc. which are design recommendations.

These Design Guidelines are intended to direct the preparation and implementation of the Downtown Development Plan (DDP) for all five districts. A DDP will be required under NT District Zoning Regulations. Some of the Design Guidelines are expected to be incorporated into the Development Criteria that are part of the DDP. Each subsequent Site Development Plan (SDP) must comply with the approved Downtown Development Plan and Development Criteria for all five districts. Each plan is an evolution of the plan that preceded it and provides more district-specific, site-specific and building-specific information about the proposed development.

Exceptions to the Development Criteria for specific SDPs may be granted by the Planning Board as allowed in the Zoning Regulations. Interpretation of the Design Guidelines is the responsibility of the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ). DPZ will work with the applicant (property owner, builder, developer, other) to develop an acceptable design response that meets the intent of these Design Guidelines. DPZ may grant modifications to these Design Guidelines based on unusual programmatic requirements, peculiar site or economic constraints, or architectural/site design merit where shown on appropriately submitted documents.

All applicable Howard County regulations and permitting processes must be adhered to and are not superseded by these Design Guidelines. Throughout this document, examples of building types, streetscapes, architectural design styles and open space design are offered; participants in the October 2005 Columbia Downtown charrette identified such images as desirable. They are for illustrative purposes only.

ORGANIZATION

The Guidelines consist of six integrated parts, including text and illustrations:

1. Introduction
2. Definitions
3. Urban Design Guidelines
4. Street Design Guidelines
5. Open Space Guidelines
6. Architecture Guidelines

The **Definitions** contain a list and the definitions of key words and phrases important to understanding the Design Guidelines. These terms are specific to the Design Guidelines and supplement the definitions found in the Howard County Zoning Regulations.

The **Urban Design Guidelines** include general provisions for all districts and specific design criteria for each district such as building heights and setbacks, recommended building types (mixed use, residential, office, etc.) and other design standards. The District Framework Diagram depicts the boundaries of the five districts and describes the type of development envisioned for each. Within the districts, development standards vary to appropriately distinguish each area. In addition, these variations enable a transition in use, density, building type and height while assuring an interconnected and seamlessly integrated development.

The **Street Design Guidelines** identify classifications and characteristics of streets, including street widths, number of travel lanes and on-street parking. This is intended to provide consistent, integrated, and coordinated development even though multiple developers and investors will be involved. The Street Framework Diagram and the Street Type Diagram illustrate a network of connected roads to serve Downtown vehicles and pedestrians.

The **Open Space Guidelines** provide design criteria and illustrative examples for each type of open space. Open Space Framework Diagram suggests locations for urban amenity areas, natural areas, parks, paths, plazas, promenades and special sites within Downtown.

The **Architecture Guidelines** do not prescribe an architectural style, but rather an aesthetic approach to ensuring a high quality, contextually-built environment.

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

These Design Guidelines include both requirements and recommendations. Requirements should be followed unless the proposed modifications are based on unusual programmatic requirements, peculiar site or economic constraints, or the proposed architectural design or site plan meets the intent of the requirements by producing a better design solution or offering additional design enhancements. Recommendations offer more flexible guidance than requirements and are provided to help achieve the Vision Plan. Any departure from the Vision Plan will be reviewed by the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Planning Board based on the following hierarchy of priorities, where flexibility increases as priority ranking decreases:

1. **District Character:** Each district has a distinct character within Downtown. It is important that this character is consistent with the Vision Plan and Design Guidelines.
2. **Street Network and Streetscape Character:** The proposed street framework, with its additional connections to existing roads, is needed to disperse traffic and ease congestion on Downtown streets and to create a safer pedestrian environment. While the exact location of the roads and connections can vary from the Vision Plan, the basic framework and diversity of street connections and pedestrian-oriented streetscape enhancements should be provided.
3. **Building and Block Configurations:** Building and block configurations may be changed from the Vision Plan if in keeping with the intent of that plan and the Design Guidelines.
4. **Mix of Uses:** The mix of uses is critical to the success of Downtown. A reasonable mix of uses and building types should be consistent with the intent of the Vision Plan.
5. **Building Types and Minimum Height:** The building types and heights are important to the character of each district. Maximum building heights are specified for each district and cannot be exceeded. Buildings must also meet minimum height requirements, except for civic, cultural or signature buildings, which may be less than the minimum height. Illustrative examples of building design are provided for each district.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

The definitions in Section 103.A of the Howard County Zoning Regulations are to be applied to the terms used in the Design Guidelines. The following definitions explain terms used in the Design Guidelines that are either not defined in the Zoning Regulations or have different meaning in the Design Guidelines.

Arcade: A continuous walkway or passageway adjacent to a building and parallel to and open to a street or open space, or a passageway within a building, usually covered by a canopy or permanent roofing, and open to public use.

Block: An increment of urban land, typically circumscribed by thoroughfares and/or streets.

Build-To-Line: A line established on a parcel to indicate the placement of the principal structure upon the parcel, parallel to the frontage and/or right-of-way, facing a street or open space. The intent of the build-to-line is to align structures on a street or open space.

Civic Building: A structure whose principal purpose is a public or civic use, such as government offices, school, post office, Columbia Association headquarters, meeting house or community center, etc.

Expression Line: An architectural treatment extending or offset from the surface plane of the building wall, or change of material, color or other treatment. Expression Lines typically delineate the transition between floor levels and base-middle-top of a building.

Frontage: The linear dimension along the front and/or side of a lot, bordering a street, public right-of-way, or open space.

Frontage Coverage: The percentage of a block occupied by building facades. The frontage coverage is calculated as the sum of the length of the building facades divided by the block length.

Frontage Facade: The front facade of a built structure parallel to a street or public right-of-way and coinciding with the build-to-line.

Frontage Street: The street bordering on a property toward which the front facade and main entrance are oriented.

Mixed-Use Building: A structure consisting of multiple uses, whose ground floor use is typically, but not limited to, retail, restaurant or similar service business, with residential, office or other uses on upper floors.

Open Space: A separate lot or area designated for protection of the environment, for recreation or for public use, including public facilities that are accessory to the outdoor use. Open space types include parks, promenades, natural areas, urban amenity areas (plazas and greens), and paths.

Signature Building: A structure whose location in relationship to the public realm, such as a position on a street or open space, requires significant attention to its architectural design because of its prominent location.

Storefront: The facade or portion of a building's front facade (typically the ground level only) with business or retail uses, typically aligned along the frontage line with the entrance to the business or retail use at sidewalk grade.

Street Type: A street classification based on the distinctive character of the roadway, which may be defined by number of potential lanes and the presence of medians or other special treatment.

Avenue: A street that typically has 2 lanes and a center median and is often designed to provide access to or links between Downtown districts.

Boulevard: A street that typically has 4 lanes and a center median and is designed to provide access to and through Downtown.

Primary Pedestrian Street: A Primary Pedestrian Street is designed to be the focus of pedestrian activity. Key areas along Primary Pedestrian Streets will have a concentration of retail, restaurants, shops, and services on the first floor of adjacent buildings. Primary Pedestrian Streets often have wide sidewalks and may have public spaces or other pedestrian amenities. Primary Pedestrian Streets may be of any type: Boulevard, Avenue, Street, or Special Street.

Private Street: A privately-owned street, driveway, or service road that provides access to a block or parcel for functions such as parking, loading, delivery and trash pick-up.

Street: A street that typically has 2 lanes and is designed to and to provide local access to Downtown uses and to disperse traffic.

Special Street: A street that is designed with narrow travel lanes and special paving treatment to enhance pedestrian use and to enable it to be closed to vehicular traffic for community events.

Vista: A view framed by buildings, structures or the landscape.

Vista Terminus: A building, site structure, or significant element of a building that terminates or punctuates the framed view. Civic buildings, sculptural pieces and special building elements serve as the most appropriate view terminators.

SECTION 3: URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The vision for Downtown is to create an active, vibrant, pedestrian-oriented Downtown that supports a broad range of uses and cultural activities. The Vision Plan depicts a Downtown with short, walkable blocks, streets lined by buildings, and sidewalks activated with ground-level shops and restaurants. The scale of streets and blocks, the network of streets, and the street frontage are important in achieving this vision. The Urban Design Guidelines provide development standards that promote this vision.

Generally, the following important design principles apply throughout Downtown:

1. There should be a variety of uses, services and building types that serve the needs of residents, workers and visitors alike.
2. There should be a variety of housing choices at differing price levels;
3. Buildings should generally line streets.
4. Parking, except for on-street parking, should be screened from public view, located behind buildings or treated architecturally to be compatible with adjacent uses.
5. On Primary Pedestrian Streets where retail uses are to be concentrated, the ground level of buildings should include shops, restaurants, and similar uses or treatments (such as windows, awnings, entranceways) that activate the sidewalk;
6. Blocks lengths should be suitable for the district in which they are located, but in general should be short and walkable.
7. There should be a network of streets that provide alternatives for traveling through downtown.
8. Streets should be designed for cars, pedestrians and, where appropriate, bicycles.
9. The types, placement, design and frequency of open spaces should be suitable to the district in which they are located.

The Urban Design Guidelines specify those elements of the plan that collectively establish the physical character and visual appearance of Downtown as viewed from the public realm. The Urban Design Guidelines describe the mix of uses, show how buildings and the street should relate, and define building heights and bulk regulations. Although the Urban Design Guidelines include discussion of the relationship of buildings to the street, detailed treatment of street and streetscape character, and the open space elements are included in later sections on Street Design and Open Space Guidelines.

The Urban Design Guidelines include **General Provisions** for all districts within Downtown. They also provide standards that are specific to each of the five districts depicted on the **District Framework Diagram**:

1. Warfield Triangle
2. Corporate Boulevard
3. Lakefront/Little Patuxent Parkway
4. The Crescent/Symphony Woods
5. The Mall

The Urban Design Guidelines vary within these five districts, although many provisions apply throughout Downtown. Maximum building heights and recommended building types vary within each district. Uses are mixed throughout.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. BLOCK CONFIGURATION:

- a. Maintaining building facades along street frontages is important, especially along Primary Pedestrian Streets where retail concentration is encouraged.
- b. Variations in building setbacks should occur in an orderly fashion. Buildings should align at the front façade. Alternating or staggering setbacks is discouraged.
- c. Blank facades, loading docks, service entrances and dumpsters are prohibited on front facades facing a Boulevard or Primary Pedestrian Street or public open space.
- d. For long blocks (400 feet or greater), access to another street or to parking garages in the middle of the block should be provided by a pedestrian way, alley or driveway. Alleys or driveways typically are private. *This ensures short blocks and relates to measuring frontage and maximum or average block length. Feedback is needed from designers on the focus group and discussion with all consultant teams. Is this really the right place for this? Is it about façade alignment or block length? The 400' recommendation has also been moved to district-specific guidelines.*

2. PRIMARY BUILDING ENTRANCE:

The principal structure, including the primary entrance, shall face a street or public open space, not a parking structure or parking lot. Where appropriate, dual access from both street and parking is encouraged.

3. PARKING AND SERVICE:

Definitions and mapping of Primary Pedestrian Streets and Boulevards may still need some further discussion and coordination with the Street Design Guidelines. The language below looks for a higher design standard for structured parking on Boulevards and Primary Pedestrian Streets, particularly in areas where retail is concentrated.

- a. Parking structures should be designed to minimize their visibility from streets. They should be located internal to blocks, where possible. Buildings in which structured parking is the sole use should be discouraged. Sloped ramps should be located internal to the structure so that they are not visible along front facades. Attention should be given to the design of parking garage interior lighting so that light sources are not visible from the street.
- b. Vehicular access to and from garages should be designed to minimize pedestrian conflicts. Access should be from Secondary Streets or alleys where possible. If vehicular access is provided directly from Primary Pedestrian Streets, a minimal opening in the building should be provided at sidewalk level. Vehicular access to parking should be designed to minimize pedestrian conflicts. Pedestrian access to and from the garages should be from the more pedestrian-oriented street.
- c. On Boulevards and Primary Pedestrian Streets, parking structures should be located behind buildings to minimize their visibility from the street (refer to the Street Framework Diagram and Street Type Diagram). If approved by the Planning Board, parking structures may be located along the street if they provide retail or commercial space on the ground floor facing the street.

- d. On treets other than Boulevards and Primary Pedestrian Streets, views of parking structures should be minimized. The structures should be designed to be compatible with nearby uses.
 - e. Reductions in parking may be granted for shared uses and on-street parking, Subject to a shared parking plan approved as part of the Site Development Plan.
 - f. Surface parking is discouraged, except as a temporary use. If surface parking is located adjacent to the street, the parking lot shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from the right-of-way or from the front façade of adjacent buildings. If the parking is a temporary use, a continuous low evergreen hedge with landscaping and trees should be installed between the parking lot and the adjacent right-of-way and / or buildings within this 20-foot zone. If the parking is a permanent use, a decorative wall or fence and landscaping should be provided along all sides of the parking.
 - g. Dedicated service areas and dumpsters shall not be visible from Boulevards and Primary Pedestrian Streets or the public realm. Service areas and dumpsters shall be screened with a wall or overhead door.
 - h. Mechanical equipment (utility boxes) should not be located in the setback between the building and the public right-of-way, nor should it be visible from the public realm. If it is not feasible to locate the equipment elsewhere or to locate it below ground, the equipment should be screened by a continuous, solid, opaque wall or fence that is architecturally integrated with the building.
4. CIVIC, CULTURAL AND SIGNATURE BUILDINGS:
- a. Buildings that terminate a street or important vista shall have special articulation and massing, such as a special façade, lobby entrance, tower element or other special treatment. Civic, cultural or signature buildings are encouraged on such prominent sites.
 - b. In order to encourage uniqueness and celebration of civic, cultural, and signature buildings, these structures are not required to adhere to the required minimum building height, build-to-line or frontage coverage requirements. Such buildings may include, but are not limited to, library, museum, fire station, Columbia Association headquarters, visitors' or exhibit center, museums, arts buildings, etc. Although these buildings are not required to meet minimum height requirements, one-story buildings are not allowed unless they are a minimum of 24 feet high. The preliminary location of such buildings and the Development Standards for them shall be noted on the Downtown Development Plan. Final location, design and bulk regulations shall be shown on the Site Development Plan approved by the Planning Board.
5. LOCATION OF DRIVE-THROUGH LANES:
- Drive-through lanes, stacking, and entranceways for drive-through windows for banks and restaurants are prohibited along Boulevards and Primary Pedestrian Streets. Stacking and access shall be from the interior of the block and shall be designed so that parking and circulation within the block is not obstructed.
6. STREET LIGHTING AND FURNITURE:
- a. Pedestrian-scale street lighting shall be provided on all streets. Spacing shall be appropriate to enable an even distribution of light. Fixtures should be approximately 12 to 16 feet high and direct light to the street and sidewalk. Poles, fixtures, finishes, and dimensions should be consistent within Downtown. Variations in type, color, and finish are discouraged, but may be allowed among districts, provided they are compatible

within Downtown. Signs, banners and hanging plants on light fixtures and poles are allowed.

- b. Street furniture, including benches, trash receptacles and planters, should be provided on all Primary Pedestrian Streets. Distribution shall be appropriate to the function of the street and placed in a manner that does not obstruct pedestrian movement. Style, finishes, and colors should be consistent within the district, but may vary among districts, provided they are compatible within Downtown. Variations within districts are discouraged.
- c. Permanent, freestanding building and tenant signs in the sidewalk are not allowed. Directional signs (providing directions to locations and not specific tenants) and location maps may be allowed in the public right-of-way if approved by Howard County.

DISTRICT FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

The Urban Design guidelines, which are keyed to the District Framework Diagram, define the character of the districts through provisions for how buildings meet the street and building heights. The District Framework Diagram is used to determine the district in which a property or development is located. The Urban Design Guidelines are used to determine general provisions as well as district-specific regulations for each district.

The District Framework Diagram divides the Downtown into five districts: Warfield Triangle, Corporate Boulevard, Lakefront / Little Patuxent Parkway, The Crescent / Symphony Woods and the Mall. The District Framework Diagram encourages a greater mix of uses in the Downtown, but the mix of uses varies among districts to create a distinct identity for each. The Urban Design Guidelines and Architectural Guidelines promote compatibility within and among the varied districts.

Warfield Triangle: Warfield Triangle is the area east of Governor Warfield Parkway and west of the Columbia Mall. The intent is to complete this retail and residential district by transforming existing surface parking lots into mixed use buildings and structured parking. The development of this area into a vibrant mixed use environment should recognize the need for compatibility with existing residential and retail uses in the district.

Corporate Boulevard: The Corporate Boulevard district is located north of Little Patuxent Parkway and south of the Mall. The intent is to transform the existing Columbia Mall ring road south of the Mall into a street largely defined by building fronts and with a high quality commercial environment appropriate for offices. This district is intended to serve as a premiere address for corporate headquarters and professional office spaces in single use and multi-tenant buildings. Retail, restaurants, and nighttime entertainment uses on the ground floor of most buildings will create an active and vibrant streetscape environment. Structured parking in this district is expected to provide shared parking for the Mall during the weekend and evenings and for Merriweather Post Pavilion and Symphony Woods when major concerts, activities, and festivals are held.

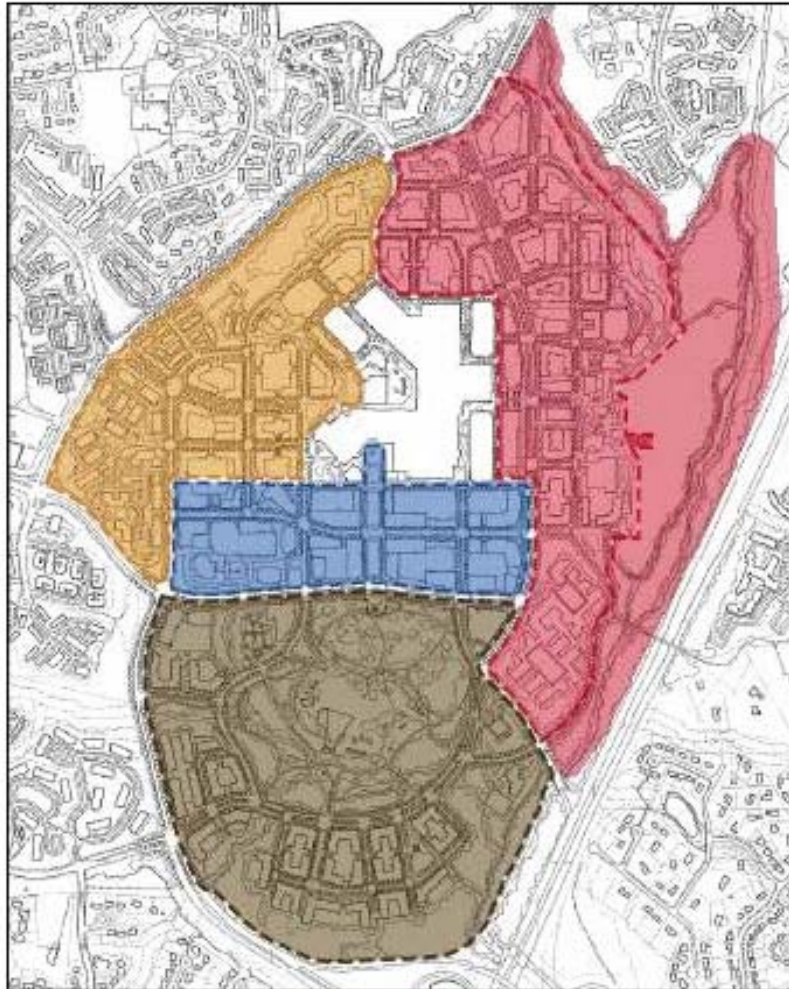
Lakefront / Little Patuxent Parkway: The Lakefront / Little Patuxent Parkway district is located from Lake Kittamaqundi westward to the Mall and from Governor Warfield Parkway on the north to the South Entrance Road on the south. The intent is to unify this district into a walkable environment with a mix of residential, office, hospitality, retail, restaurant, entertainment, and civic and cultural uses. The Lakefront core area will remain the heart of an






active and vibrant Downtown environment, with ground floor and outdoor uses largely focused on community and leisure time activities with various restaurant and entertainment destinations. Little Patuxent Parkway is transformed into a more pedestrian-friendly street largely defined by buildings with on-street parking. Wincopin Circle is extended to the north and south as a pedestrian-oriented street. A new east-west pedestrian link from the Mall to the Lakefront is proposed.

The Crescent / Symphony Woods: The Crescent / Symphony Woods district is located east of Broken Land Parkway, south of Little Patuxent Parkway and west of South Entrance Road. It includes Symphony Woods and the large undeveloped land known as the Crescent property. The intent is to create a new mixed use neighborhood at the southern gateway to Downtown. The Crescent is envisioned as a residential and office district that will include some shops and restaurants, and perhaps a boutique hotel. Symphony Woods will remain as Columbia's central public park. Existing civic, cultural and entertainment uses, including the Central Library, Merriweather Post Pavilion and Toby's Dinner Theater, are key features of this district. A network of new streets and pathways is expected to connect The Crescent to other nearby districts.

The Mall: *This district was not included in the original Vision Plan and the Draft Design Guidelines. Description and regulations will be provided in the next draft of the Design Guidelines.*

DISTRICT FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM



Legend	
	Warfield Triangle
	Corporate Boulevard
	Lakefront / Little Patuxent Parkway
	The Crescent / Symphony Woods
	The Mall

WARFIELD TRIANGLE

A. PERMITTED USES:

Except as otherwise provided in the Downtown Development Plan, the following shall be permitted as a matter of right: open space; residential uses including single family attached units and apartments; and nonresidential uses designated in the Zoning Regulations.

B. BUILDING HEIGHT:

Minimum 3 stories, maximum 6 stories, not to exceed 85 feet in height. Civic, cultural and signature buildings as described under General Provisions are exempt from the minimum building height.

C. FRONTAGE COVERAGE:

Upon completion of the block, building facades shall constitute 80% to 100% of block length (sum of building lengths divided by block length) and may consist of several buildings. Block length is measured between street right-of-ways (not including alleys) or to a property line or stream buffer.

D. BUILD-TO-LINE:

Ten to twenty-five feet from edge of curb to building face unless public open space is located between street and building. No minimum required setback from right-of-way.

E. BUILDING SEPARATIONS / SIDE SETBACKS:

The separation between buildings will vary, but should be sufficient to allow for pedestrian or vehicular access, where appropriate. A separation of 30 to 40 feet should be provided if an alley or driveway is located between buildings.

F. BLOCK AND BUILDING STANDARDS:

Block Length: maximum length 500 feet, average length 350 feet or less. Block lengths are expected to vary within districts. Long blocks (400 feet or greater) should have a pedestrian way, alley or driveway that provides through access to another street or mid-block parking garages.

Retail Tenant Footprint: maximum 40,000 square foot single retail tenant footprint.

G. OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

Open Space Types: Plazas and greens.

Open Space Requirement: 5% of the developable area in the district, as defined by new blocks in the District Framework Diagram, shall be devoted to Urban Amenity Areas. Criteria and recommendations for open space distribution and design are found in the Open Space Guidelines.

H. RECOMMENDED BUILDING TYPES

The following are captions for photographs of recommended building types.

Mixed Use: Mixed Use buildings have more than one use, often residential apartments or office space above retail.

Residential: Multi-family residential buildings and single family attached units.

CORPORATE BOULEVARD

A. PERMITTED USES:

Except as otherwise provided in the Downtown Development Plan, the following shall be permitted as a matter of right: open space; residential uses including single family attached units and apartments; and nonresidential uses designated in the Zoning Regulations.

B. BUILDING HEIGHT:

Minimum 4 stories, maximum 20 stories, not to exceed 250 feet in height. Civic, cultural and signature buildings as described under General Provisions are exempt from the minimum building height.

C. FRONTAGE COVERAGE:

Upon completion of the block, building facades shall constitute 80% to 100% of block length (sum of building lengths divided by block length) and may consist of several buildings. Block length is measured between street right-of-ways (not including alleys) or to a property line or stream buffer.

D. BUILD-TO-LINE:

Ten to twenty-five feet from edge of curb to building face unless public open space is located between street and building. No minimum required setback from right-of-way.

E. BUILDING SEPARATIONS / SIDE SETBACKS:

The separation between buildings will vary, but should be sufficient to allow for pedestrian or vehicular access, where appropriate. A separation of 30 to 40 feet should be provided if an alley or driveway is located between buildings.

F. BLOCK AND BUILDING STANDARDS:

Block Length: maximum length 800 feet, average length 400 feet or less. Block lengths are expected to vary within districts. Long blocks (400 feet or greater) should have a pedestrian way, alley or driveway that provides through access to another street or to mid-block parking garages.
Retail Tenant Footprint: maximum 40,000 square foot single retail tenant footprint.

G. OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

Open Space Types: Plazas, greens, and promenades.

Open Space Requirement: 5% of the developable area in the district, as defined by new blocks in the District Framework Diagram, shall be devoted to Urban Amenity Area. Criteria and recommendations for open space distribution and design are found in the Open Space Guidelines.

H. RECOMMENDED BUILDING TYPES

The following are captions for photographs of recommended building types.

Mixed Use: Mixed Use buildings have more than one use, often residential apartments or office space above retail.

Office: A building whose primary use is office, but which may include retail or other uses at the ground levels or penthouse level.

LAKEFRONT / LITTLE PATUXENT PARKWAY

A. PERMITTED USES:

Except as otherwise provided in the Downtown Development Plan, the following shall be permitted as a matter of right: open space; residential uses including single family attached units and apartments; and nonresidential uses designated in the Zoning Regulations.

B. BUILDING HEIGHT:

Core Area: minimum 4 stories, maximum 6 stories, not to exceed 80 feet in height.

Outside Core Area: minimum 4 stories, maximum 20 stories, not to exceed 250 feet in height.

Civic, Cultural and Signature Buildings: exempt from the minimum building height, as described under General Provision.

C. FRONTAGE COVERAGE:

Upon completion of the block, building facades shall constitute 80% to 100% of block length (sum of building lengths divided by block length) and may consist of several buildings. Block length is measured between street right-of-ways (not including alleys) or to a property line or stream buffer.

D. BUILD-TO-LINE:

Ten to twenty-five feet from edge of curb to building face unless public open space is located between street and building. No minimum required setback from right-of-way.

E. BUILDING SEPARATIONS/SIDE SETBACKS:

The separation between buildings will vary, but should be sufficient to allow for pedestrian or vehicular access, where appropriate. A separation of 30 to 40 feet should be provided if an alley or driveway is located between buildings.

F. BLOCK AND BUILDING STANDARDS:

Block Length: maximum length 600 feet, average length 350 feet or less. Block lengths are expected to vary within districts. Long blocks (400 feet or greater) should have a pedestrian way, alley or driveway that provides through access to another street or to mid-block parking garages.

Retail Tenant Footprint: maximum 20,000 square foot single retail tenant footprint in the Core Area, maximum 40,000 square feet Outside Core Area in locations adjacent to the Mall.

G. OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

Open Space Types: Plazas, greens, parks, promenades and paths.

Open Space Requirement: 5% of the developable area in the district, as defined by new blocks in the District Framework Diagram, shall be devoted to Urban Amenity Areas. Criteria and recommendations for open space distribution and design are found in the Open Space Guidelines.

H. RECOMMENDED BUILDING TYPES

The following are captions for photographs of recommended building types.

Mixed Use: Mixed Use Buildings have more than one use, often residential apartments or office space above retail.

Office: A building whose primary use is office, but which may include retail or other uses at the ground levels or penthouse level.

Residential: Multi-family residential buildings and single-family attached units.

THE CRESCENT/SYMPHONY WOODS

A. PERMITTED USES:

Except as otherwise provided in the Downtown Development Plan, the following shall be permitted as a matter of right: open space; residential uses including single-family attached units and apartments; and nonresidential uses designated in the Zoning Regulations.

B. BUILDING HEIGHT:

Minimum 4 stories, maximum 20 stories, not to exceed 250 feet in height. Civic, cultural and signature buildings as described under General Provisions are exempt from the minimum building height.

C. FRONTAGE COVERAGE:

Upon completion of the block, building facades shall constitute 80% to 100% of block length (sum of building lengths divided by block length) and may consist of several buildings. Block length is measured between street right-of-ways (not including alleys) or to a property line or stream buffer. Required setbacks may be subtracted from the block length.

D. BUILD-TO-LINE:

Ten to twenty-five feet from edge of curb to building face unless public open space is located between street and building. No minimum required setback from right-of-way.

E. BUILDING SEPARATIONS/SIDE SETBACKS:

The separation between buildings will vary, but should be sufficient to allow for pedestrian or vehicular access, where appropriate. A separation of 30 to 40 feet should be provided if an alley or driveway is located between buildings.

F. BLOCK AND BUILDING STANDARDS:

Block Length: maximum length 500 feet, average length 350 feet or less. Block lengths are expected to vary within districts. Long blocks (400 feet or greater) should have a pedestrian way, alley or driveway that provides through access to another street or to mid-block parking garages. **Retail Tenant Footprint:** maximum 20,000 square foot single retail tenant footprint in the Core Area, maximum 40,000 square feet Outside Core Area in locations adjacent to the Mall.

G. OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

Open Space Types: Plazas, greens, promenades, paths, and parks.

Open Space Requirement: 5% of the developable area in the district, as defined by new blocks in the District Framework Diagram, shall be devoted to Urban Amenity Areas. Criteria and recommendations for open space distribution and design are found on the Open Space Guidelines.

H. RECOMMENDED BUILDING TYPES

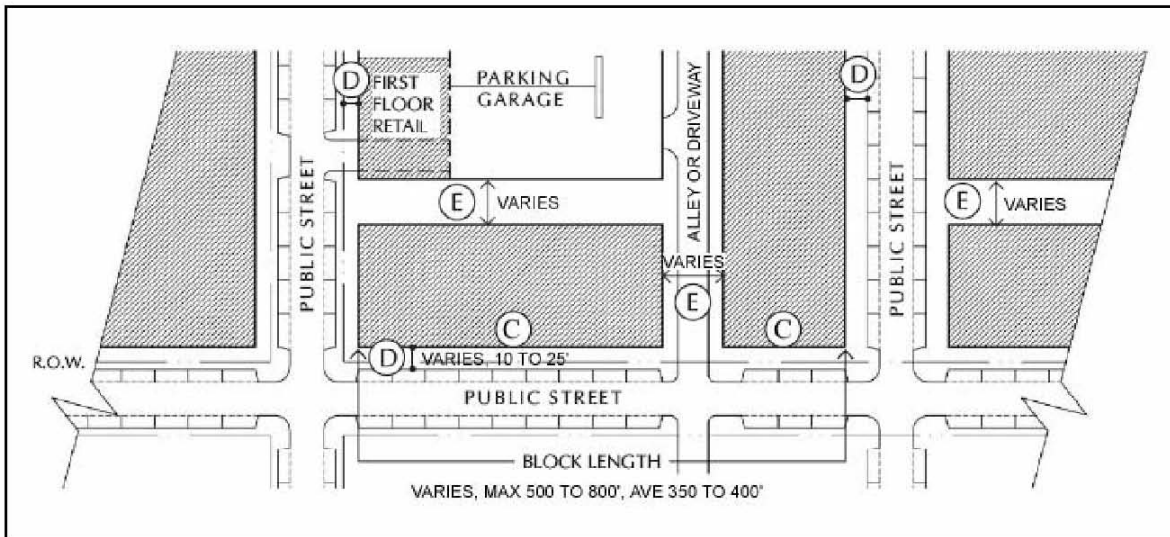
The following are captions for photographs of recommended building types.

Mixed Use: Mixed Use Buildings have more than one use, often residential apartments or office space above retail.

Residential: Multi-family residential buildings and single-family attached units.

Office: A building whose primary use is office, but which may include retail or other uses at the ground level or penthouse level.

DISTRICT DIAGRAM – TYPICAL



RECOMMENDED BUILDING TYPES



Mixed Use Buildings



Residential Buildings



Office Buildings

SECTION 4: STREETS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Vision Plan for the Downtown calls for a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use community design that requires a different approach to street design. To create a unique urban environment, it is anticipated that streets within Downtown will vary from the current standards in the Howard County Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and the Design Manual, Volume III.

Streets within an urban or downtown environment are an important part of the open space system. They should be designed for both people and cars. While not as green or landscaped as most open spaces are, the streets provide visual openness and spatial definition, and they are vital to the vibrancy of the Downtown. Although all streets should be pedestrian-oriented, certain streets, designated as Primary Pedestrian Streets, will contain areas with significant amounts of pedestrian activity: shopping, walking, strolling, outdoor dining, seating, and conversing. The design and character of the streets (including sidewalks, street trees, light poles, furniture, etc.) requires careful consideration. To provide a pedestrian-friendly environment, the network should incorporate traffic calming measures such as frequent intersections, crosswalks, on street parking or similar treatments.

The Street Design Guidelines provide roadway and streetscape standards for public and private streets in Downtown.

1. **General Provisions** provide overall guidelines for all streets.
2. **The Street Framework Diagram** depicts a network of existing and potential streets designed to accommodate and disperse traffic in Downtown, yet balance pedestrian and vehicular use. The Primary Pedestrian Streets is derived from the Pedestrian Connections Plan in the Vision Plan. This diagram identifies those streets that are expected to have areas of retail concentrated along their frontage. The retail concentrations along the Primary Pedestrian Streets often extend from or create strong links to the Mall or to the existing restaurant and entertainment area at the Lakefront.
3. The **Street Types Diagram** depicts suggested street types based on their distinctive character, which may be defined by number of potential lanes and the presence of medians or other special treatment.
4. The **Street Plans and Sections**, which are keyed to the Street Types Diagram, provide illustrative sections and plan details, including recommended dimensions for each street type.

The guidelines documented in this chapter are important in order to achieve the distinctive pedestrian-friendly network of streets vital to a walkable new community. The diagrams, plans, and sections are conceptual in nature and are intended to provide guidance for the preparation of the Downtown Development Plan (DDP). The DDP will show the preliminary street layout and will include Development Criteria for public and private roads and for their related pedestrian areas. Final design of individual streets and streetscape treatments will be shown on the Site Development Plan.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. ROADS

- a. All roads shall be public roads except for driveways and service roads within blocks or within individual parcels.
- b. Transitions from one street type to another shall be designed to ensure smooth changes between paving, parking, sidewalks, planting strips, and other streetscape elements.
- c. If site conditions warrant modification to the Street Plans and Sections, consistency in the lane widths and sidewalk widths is more important than consistency in planting strip width or on-street parking layout. At an intersection where two different street types meet or where an existing street meets a new street, appropriate transitions should be designed to ensure vehicular and pedestrian flow consistent with the urban setting intended by these Guidelines. Modifications will require County approval.
- d. Curb radii at street intersections will vary. The County will determine the appropriate curb radius based on type and volume of vehicular traffic and the need to provide for suitable and adequate pedestrian crossings at intersections.

2. SIDEWALKS

- a. The intent of the Vision Plan is to build a system of pedestrian connections that will provide continuity through the Downtown. This network will be constructed in phase with new development. Streets shall have sidewalks along both sides throughout the Downtown unless unusual conditions (for example, connections to regional highway) cause the County to waive sidewalk requirements or to approve design solutions that otherwise meet the intent of the regulations or provide a better solution for pedestrian access. Sidewalks shall be designed consistently along both sides of the entire length of a street.
- b. Where retail, storefronts, and building frontages with building entrances and multiple doors align a street, various sidewalk widths may be appropriate based on the use of the sidewalk and the adjacent building:
 - i. The sidewalk width shall be not less than 10 feet from curb to face of building. The 10 foot width will typically be within the public right-of-way so may not include arcades and sidewalk cafes. Trees should be planted in tree pits.
 - ii. In areas where retail uses are concentrated and heavy pedestrian use is expected, the sidewalk width shall be 15 feet from the curb to the building. Trees should be planted in tree pits. The recommended layout includes a 4 foot zone along the curb for trees, signs and space for door opening for parked cars; a minimum 8 foot clear zone for pedestrian; plus a minimum 1 foot space along the building façade.
 - iii. If a wider pedestrian passage is desired or needed to accommodate outdoor dining, arcades, landscaped areas or other uses, the setback to the first floor of the building should be increased to up to 25 feet from the face of the curb. This setback area can include the sidewalk, landscaping and special areas, as appropriate. As provided for in the Urban Design Guidelines, deeper setbacks may be approved by the Planning Board if urban amenity areas are provided between the curb and the building.
- c. In instances where only office or residential windows face the street, the sidewalk shall not be less than 5 feet wide. In such conditions, the sidewalk should be located so that there is a planting area suitable for trees and/or landscaping adjacent to the building and / or adjacent to the curb.

3. CROSSWALKS

- a. Crosswalks should be provided at all intersections where sidewalks traverse vehicular lanes.
- b. Crosswalks of a different paving material, texture, or color from the street paving material are encouraged in areas of retail concentration.
- c. Paving materials and textures should be chosen for ease of pedestrian movement and maintenance. Paving materials shall be approved by the County. Crosswalks should be similar within Downtown, although variation may be allowed among districts. Variations may also be allowed among different types of streets.

4. STREET TREES

- a. Except where inconsistent with these Guidelines, street tree requirements shall comply with Section 16.136 of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, Chapter V of the Landscape Manual, and AASHTO standards for street tree setbacks, clear zones, and sight lines per Chapter 2 of the Design Manual, Volume III.
- b. Street trees shall be planted along all new public streets and on existing public streets where new development is located adjacent to the right-of-way.
- c. Where existing wooded areas are adjacent to the right-of-way, the County may approve the existing trees as sufficient to meet the intent of the street tree requirements.
- d. Trees and other plantings within State rights-of-way shall meet SHA standards.
- e. Street trees shall be provided on private streets unless those streets serve as alleys or service driveways.
- f. Street trees should be consistent along an entire street (the length of the street), but may vary from one street to the next. For example, one street may have maples, while the next street over may have oaks. Refer to the Howard County Landscape Manual for approved tree species.
- g. Street trees located between the curb and the sidewalk should be centered in planting pits that are a minimum 4 feet wide by 6 feet long. Planting pits may have tree grates or may be planted with a groundcover. Howard County may approve or require variations in the dimensions of tree pits and grates from those shown in the Street Plans and Sections, depending on the size or species of street tree, planting methods used, and engineering design of the curb and sidewalk.
- h. Trees shall be planted at regular intervals along streets appropriate to the particular location and species. Trees should be planted approximately 30 feet on center.
- i. To create comfortable pedestrian passage, street trees shall have their limbs over sidewalks pruned to approximately 7 feet above grade when reasonably mature.
- j. Street Tree Selection Criteria:
 - i. Street trees shall have a minimum 3-1/2 inch caliper at installation.
 - ii. Trees shall fit the space limitations when mature. The species, ultimate size of the tree and the canopy shall be appropriate to the street type.
 - iii. Trees must be able to survive the environmental stresses of the proposed location.
 - iv. Street trees shall be straight and true, have healthy trunks, and a full, balanced crown and branching habit.
 - v. Medium, large or canopy trees should be used for street trees while small ornamental trees should be used to provide variety in medians, at entries and/or within open space areas.
 - vi. Small trees are not permitted in situations where they inhibit sight distances, conflict with pedestrian circulation or create maintenance problems.

- vii. No needle evergreen trees shall be planted in a public right-of-way. No thorn bearing trees or trees with rigid, sharply pointed leaves (such as some evergreen holly trees) shall be planted directly adjacent to sidewalks or pathways.

5. LANDSCAPING

- a. If approved by the County, landscaping within the right-of-way that exceeds the required street trees shall be planted and maintained by the property owner(s), developers, homeowner's associations and/or other private entities. *Need to discuss further with DPW, CA, GGP, and others. This may be an issue for downtown management.*

STREET FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

The Street Framework Diagram illustrates a potential network of connected roads that are intended to serve Downtown vehicles and pedestrians. Final street layouts will depend on engineering feasibility and the fabric of block sizes and configurations that respond to the land use mix in each of the districts. The Street Framework Diagram is intended to help disperse pedestrian and vehicular traffic through Downtown. The Framework Diagram uses dashed lines to depict potential alignments for roads that will need further engineering and environmental studies to determine if they should be added to the street network proposed by the Vision Plan. The Street Framework Diagram identifies those segments of the Downtown streets that are expected to be the focus of pedestrian activity. Primary Pedestrian Streets will have a concentration of retail, restaurants, shops, and services on the first floor of adjacent buildings. The streets often will have wide sidewalks and may have urban amenity areas or other features such as benches, special plantings, and public art.

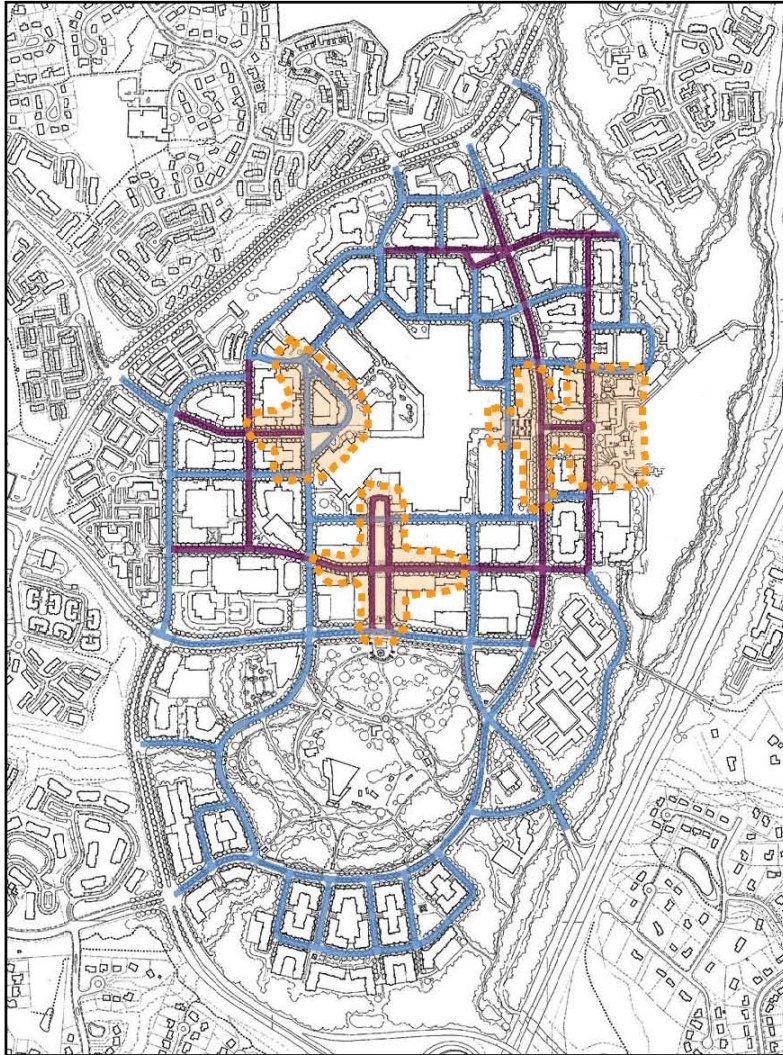
The Other Streets depicted on the Street Framework Diagram are likely to have less activity than Primary Pedestrian Streets, although they may have some retail, restaurant or service activities in the ground floor of adjacent buildings. These streets may have garage entrances and/or provide access to service areas.

STREET TYPE DIAGRAM

The Street Type Plan identifies several potential categories of Downtown streets. Street Sections and Plans illustrate the distinctive character proposed for each of the various Street Types within Downtown. The street character is created by establishing criteria for the width and number of potential lanes, the presence of medians, special roadway paving and sidewalk treatment.

The Street Types, their right-of-way dimensions, the ability to provide on-street parking, etc. is subject to ongoing review and comment by the Department of Public Work, the Department of planning and Zoning's Development Engineering Division and the charrette transportation consultant Glatting Jackson. Criteria for street design, street capacity and intersection configuration are also addressed in the Master Plan, Chapter 4, Implementation Strategies. The number of lanes for all streets will be subject to traffic capacity studies.

STREET FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

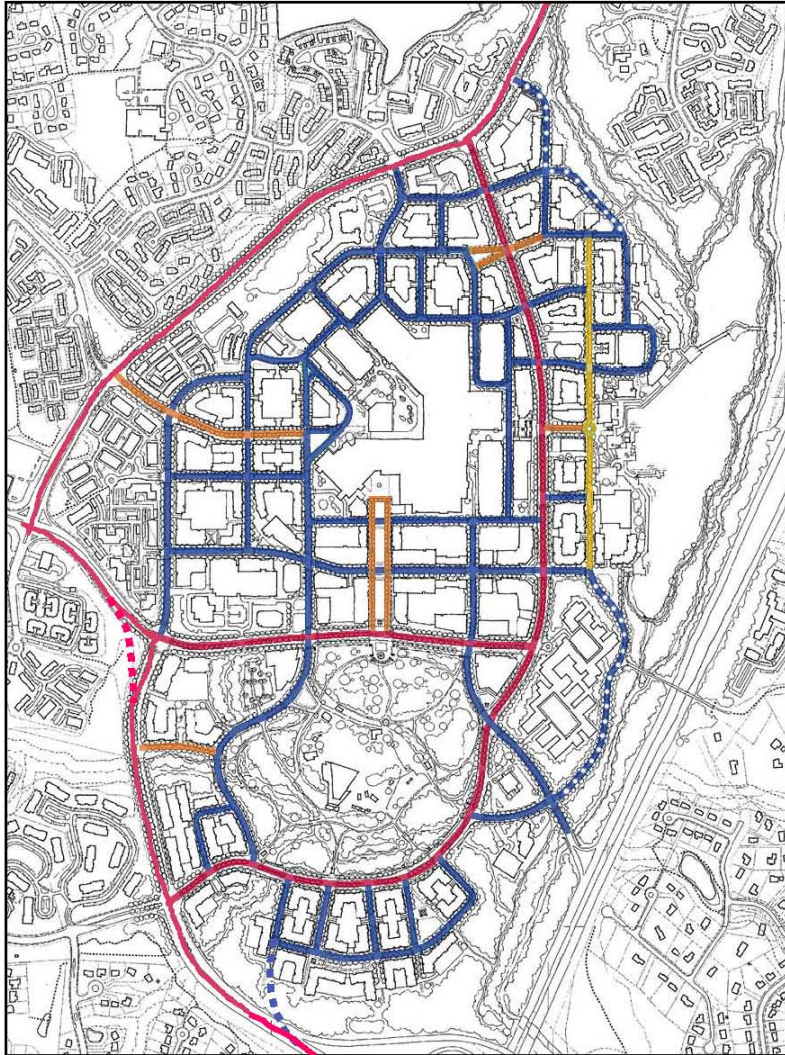


Legend


- Primary Pedestrian Streets
- Other Streets
- Areas where retail activity is likely to be concentrated

Refined locations to be shown on DDP and SDP. Retail concentration for the Crescent not yet determined

STREET TYPES DIAGRAM



Legend

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Boulevard: 4 Lanes with Median |  Street: 2 Lanes |
|  Avenue: 2 Lanes with Median |  Special Street: 2 Lanes |

Number of lanes for all streets subject to traffic capacity study. See Design Guidelines for Sections.

STREET SECTIONS AND PLANS

1. BOULEVARD: FOUR LANES WITH CENTER MEDIAN

(Illustration) Buildings on both sides of the road.

Example: Little Patuxent Parkway at the Mall.

(Illustration) Buildings on one side; open space on the other side.

Example: Little Patuxent Parkway at Symphony Woods.

2. AVENUE: TWO LANES WITH CENTER MEDIAN

Example: Twin Rivers Road extended.

(Illustration) Buildings on both sides of the road.

3. STREET: TWO LANES

(Illustration) Buildings on both sides of the road.

Example: Corporate Boulevard.

(Illustration) Buildings on one side; plaza, green, or square on the other side.

Example: South Entrance Road.

4. SPECIAL STREET

(Illustration) Buildings on both sides of the road.

Example: Wincopin Street.

(Illustration) Buildings on one side; plaza, green, or square on the other side.

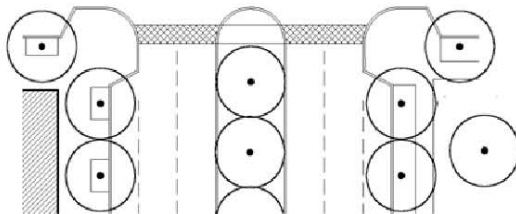
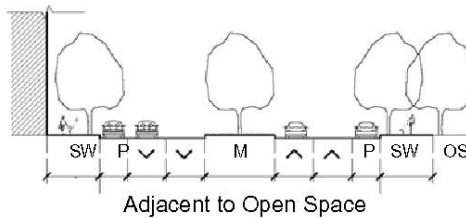
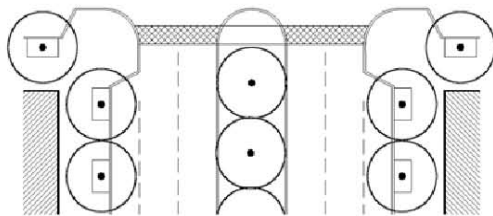
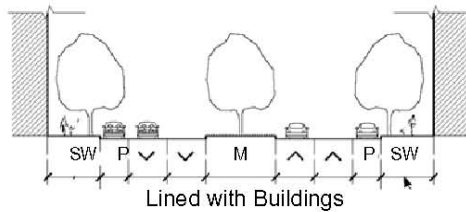
Example: Wincopin Street at the Lakefront.

5. PRIVATE ACCESS DRIVEWAYS AND SERVICE ROADS

(Illustration) Buildings on both sides of the road.

STREET TYPES – SECTIONS & PLANS

4 Lane Boulevard



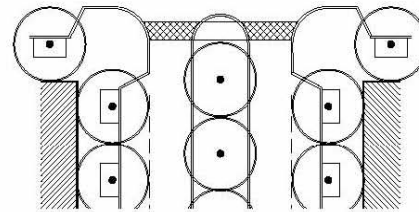
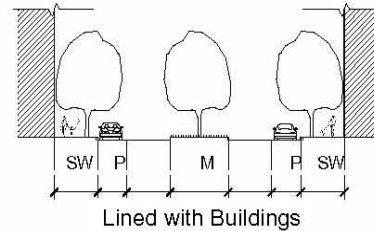
Example:

Little Patuxent Parkway

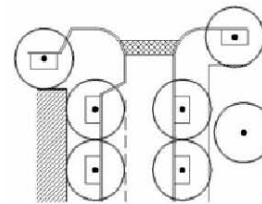
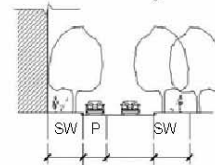
Dimensions:

20' median, 12' turning lane, up to 16' through lane w/bike, 8' parking

2 Lane Avenue



Variation with Wide Lane or for 1 Way Street



Example:

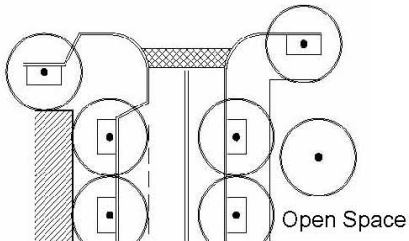
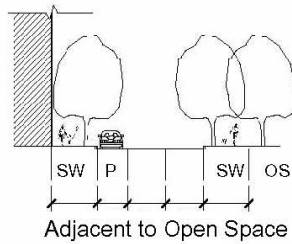
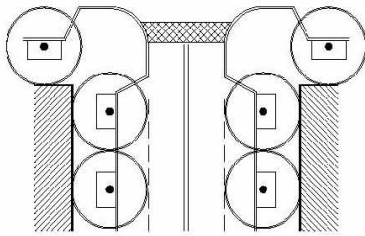
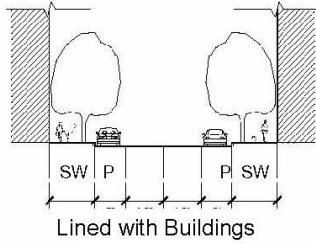
Twin Rivers Extended, Mall Promenade

Dimensions:

20' median, 12' lane, up to 16' w/bike; 8' parking

STREET TYPES – SECTIONS & PLANS

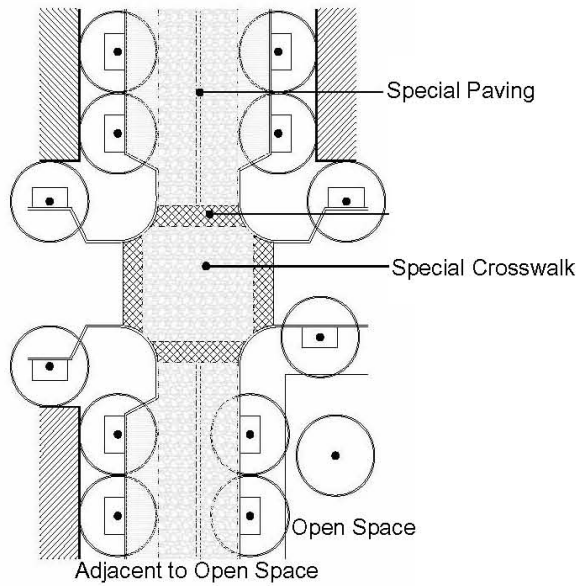
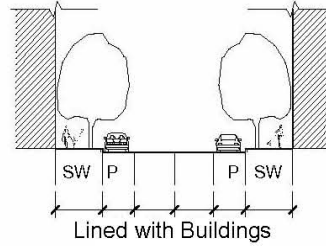
2 Lane Street



Example:
Most Streets

Dimensions:
12' or 16' lane (w/ bike) , 8' parking

2 Lane Special Street



Example:
Wincopin Street

Dimensions:
10' lane, 8' parking (15 mph)

SECTION 5: OPEN SPACE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The public open spaces within the Downtown are an integral component of the overall Vision Plan. From Columbia's inception, the Downtown has been envisioned as a setting of natural beauty, with Lake Kittamaqundi and Symphony Woods as major attractions within an extensive open space network that serves and connects to all of Columbia. New components of the open space system will create public gathering spaces; provide ideal locations for public art, seating, fountains, and landscaping; preserve additional streams, wetlands, and woodlands; offer locations for passive and active recreation; and contribute to the overall character and success of the Downtown. The new open spaces should continue to be designed as a system of connected places. Variations in open space type, size and design should occur from district to district.

Open spaces will include parks, greens and plazas, as well as paths and promenades, and preserved natural areas. The greens and plazas are placed in the more urbanized areas, where spontaneous activity is generated by people entering and exiting buildings and shops, and where restaurants are encouraged to have outdoor dining. These spaces may also host planned activities. Paths and promenades are designed primarily to allow movement from one destination to another, although in some instances the promenades may be designed to accommodate public gatherings. Symphony Woods is to be designed as Columbia's central park. Lake Kittamaqundi and the Lakefront area, with its variety public spaces and natural areas, also serves as a Downtown park. These two important Downtown destinations should continue to offer a variety of passive recreation opportunities and remain suitable as a setting for major events. However, Symphony Woods should also invite more frequent use and offer appropriate active recreational uses as well.

The Open Space Design Guidelines include:

1. **General Provisions** that provide guidance for all components of the open space system.
2. The **Open Space Framework Diagram** that shows recommended locations for various types of open spaces suitable for the Downtown.
3. The **Open Space Types** that describes the components of the open space system and provides illustrative examples of how these spaces may be designed.

The Open Space Guidelines offer criteria for the location and design of various open space elements and provide illustrations of open space types that may be appropriate for Downtown. The preliminary location of open spaces shall be established in the Downtown Development Plan (DDP) for all five districts, and the appropriate design guidelines for these spaces should be included in the Development Criteria that are part of the DDP. The Site Development Plans will show the final location, program of use and the appropriate design expression for each open space.

The Guidelines primarily focus on public outdoor spaces. These spaces, however, are not the only Downtown opportunities for recreation and community gathering. The pedestrian-oriented streets create a network of sidewalks that are part of the public realm and offer social and recreational opportunities, as well as functional connections among Downtown destinations. Criteria for pedestrian sidewalks are included in the Street Design Guidelines. Potential civic and cultural sites are shown on the Open Space and Special Sites Plan as important locations for

public activity. These Special Sites, whether civic, cultural or signature buildings because of their special location or use, will often provide prime opportunities for public spaces or public art.

The primary purpose of the Open Space Guidelines is to address the character of open spaces that will be used by the public. Some Downtown residential developments may offer private recreation facilities, both indoor and outdoor, for their residents. These facilities will supplement the public spaces in serving the needs of those who live Downtown. Criteria for these uses (pools, community buildings, exercise rooms, etc.) are not included in these Guidelines as their design and location will be market-driven and, if indoor uses, will be integral to architectural plans.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. LOCATION AND CONFIGURATION

- a. Potential open space locations are depicted in the illustrative Open Space Framework Diagram. The Downtown Development Plan (DDP) for all five districts will show the proposed open space elements and will incorporate relevant portions of the Open Space Design Guidelines into the Development Criteria required under NT District Zoning Regulations. Each subsequent Site Development Plan (SDP) must comply with the approved Downtown Development Plan and Development Criteria for that district.
- b. Downtown shall meet the Columbia minimum 36% open space requirement.
- c. Each district is required to provide at least 5% of the developable area, as defined by new blocks in the Districts Framework Diagram and subsequent DDP, for urban amenity areas. Urban amenity areas shall be a minimum of 1,000 square feet and shall be distributed throughout the district and not combined in a single area. Some blocks may have amenity areas while others may not. Amenity areas shall be provided in phase with development and shall not be the last feature provided in a district. Urban amenity areas shall be considered part of the required 36% open space provided they are permanently available for public use.
- d. The following areas cannot be used to fulfill the minimum 5% urban amenity area requirements:
 - i. Existing credited or noncredited open space.
 - ii. Sidewalks and related pedestrian areas within the right-of way or within building setback areas.
 - iii. Natural areas set aside to meet Howard County sensitive areas requirements.

2. DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

- a. Open spaces should be physically and visually accessible, and designed to invite people of various ages and mobility.
- b. Open spaces should be designed for their intended function; for example, plazas should be designed with adequate amounts of hardscape to accommodate public gatherings; large greens or parks should minimize hardscape areas that will detract from their intended appearance as a green oasis dominated by turf and trees.
- c. Open spaces should not be overly designed with structures and planting that will block visibility to storefronts, public art, or important vistas.
- d. Open spaces should be designed with consideration for local climate and sun exposure during different seasons of the year.

- e. Where appropriate, take advantage of views from open spaces to visually link these spaces with the public realm and special sites within the rest of the Downtown.
- f. Open space design should give careful consideration to maintenance, so that even in severe conditions and with limited maintenance, the open spaces always look attractive.

3. SEATING

- a. Open spaces should provide for a variety of seating locations, orientations, and arrangements, including primary seating (benches and chairs with backs) and secondary seating in the form of steps, planters, and walls.
- b. Seating should be oriented so that sitters can watch passersby.
- c. Optimal seating wall heights should be approximately 16 to 18 inches, although heights from 9 to 30 inches may provide seating opportunities.

4. PUBLIC ART

- a. Public art and fountains should be incorporated in the open space design of each district. Special sites for civic, cultural or signature buildings offer potential focal point locations for sculpture, fountains, and special landscape features.

5. HARDSCAPE MATERIALS

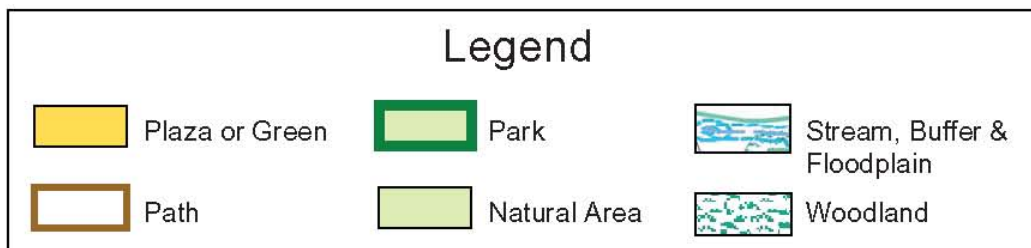
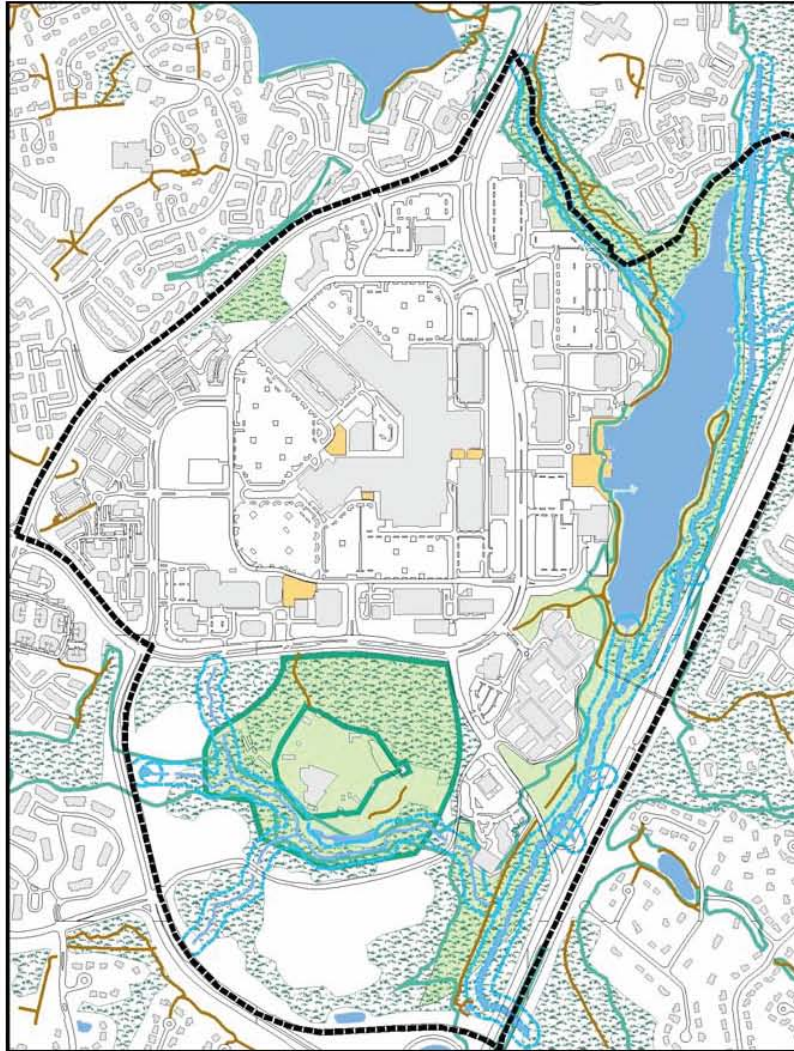
- a. Materials shall be selected that are durable and appropriate for the scale and context of Downtown. They shall be materials that are typically used in the construction of urban spaces. Although materials must be suitable for significant pedestrian use, their quality and appearance shall reflect their importance as amenity spaces within the public realm.
- b. Walls should be constructed of brick, stone, decorative or architectural block, or similar materials. Interlocking, precast wall units are not recommended.
- c. Pavement in urban amenity areas should be brick, stone, concrete pavers, concrete. Large expanses of concrete paving without details, scoring patterns, or brick/stone banding are not recommended.
- d. Pervious materials are encouraged for paths in parks and natural areas; however, impervious paving may be used in high volume pedestrian areas. Boardwalks should be used where paths cross wet areas.

OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

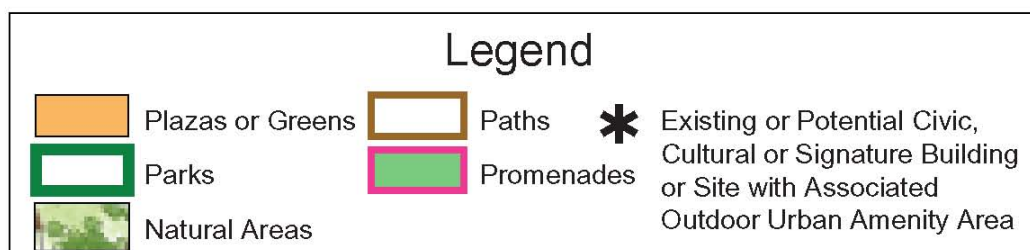
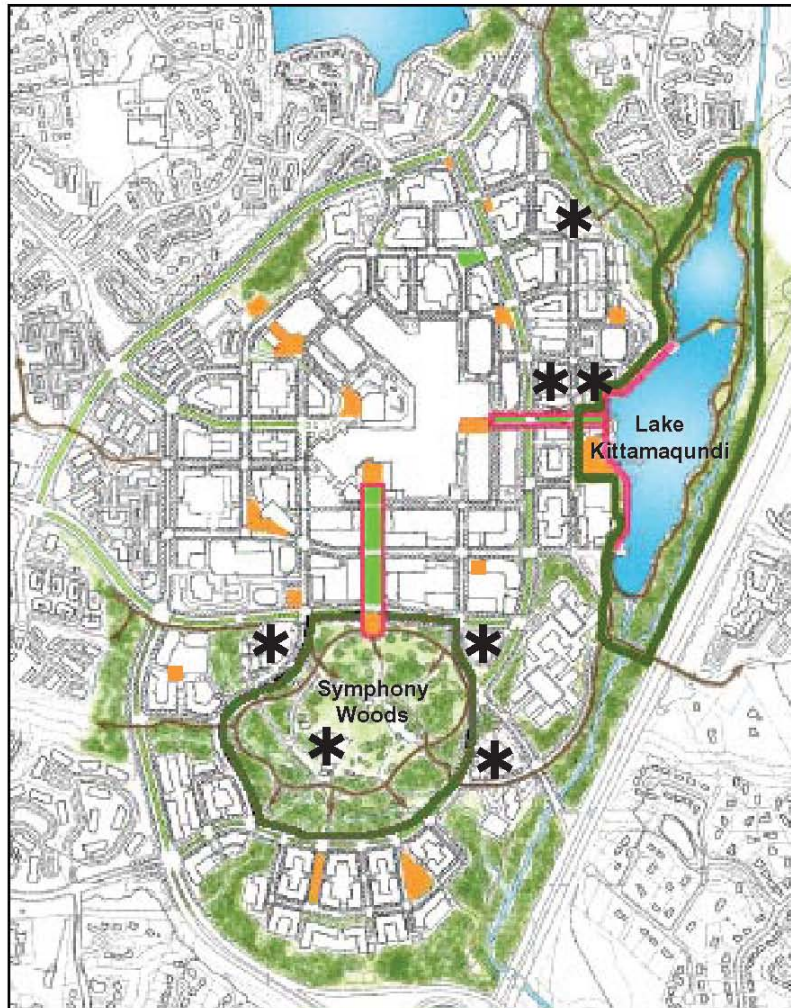
The Open Space Framework Diagram suggests a network of open spaces, including parks, promenades, natural areas, urban amenity areas (plazas and greens), and paths that form a Downtown open space system connecting to the larger Columbia-wide open space network. Greens and plazas should be located at sites such as the terminus of important vistas, at key intersections, along major pedestrian routes to the Lakefront and to Symphony Woods, and, where appropriate, at central locations within each district. Pedestrian promenades should link the Mall to the Lakefront and to Symphony Woods, and the existing promenade at the Lake should be extended. A promenade should be created to link the south entrance of the Mall to Symphony Woods. Where appropriate, paths should be provided along natural areas and through parks to connect open spaces and to enhance the enjoyment and visibility of these areas. Symphony Woods should retain its pastoral character yet be improved with paths, gathering areas and recreational opportunities that invite greater use. The Open Space Framework Diagram also considers locations for cultural, civic and signature buildings that, based on their prominent locations or community-oriented functions, can contribute to the public realm by providing space

for urban amenity areas or public art. These sites can serve as potential focal points within the open space network.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE SYSTEM



OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM



PARK

A park is a public space available for active and passive recreation, typically located at the edge of the district, with access from a public thoroughfare and sometimes includes or is connected to Natural Areas. The landscape generally consists of, but is not limited to, lawn, trees, gardens and walks. Although parks may be designed or remain in a somewhat natural state, they require maintenance. Parks may accommodate active structured recreation such as urban playgrounds, tot lots, picnic areas, and related parking. Parks in the Downtown are anticipated to be flexible green spaces used for a variety of functions, including active recreation, at times, as well as festivals and other events.

SYMPHONY WOODS

Symphony Woods is an existing park in the Downtown and the only major park recognized in the Vision Plan. As a park, Symphony Woods should remain mostly natural in character, with informal and naturalistic plantings, largely lawn and trees. Limited areas may be more intensely landscaped as appropriate to the intended function of the specific area. The Vision Plan suggests several improvements and activities for Symphony Woods:

1. A promenade connection from the Mall to Symphony Woods that terminates at an entrance plaza to the park. A wide sidewalk along Little Patuxent Parkway to accommodate pedestrian movement.
2. Possible activities such as a tot lot or children's playground, a covered ice skating rink that can be used for other special events, arts festivals, Wine in the Woods, etc. Plans for such activities may also include the potential for a small building or structure, an adjacent plaza or gathering area, and electrical, lighting and similar infrastructure.
3. A sculpture garden.
4. Paths, open lawns (potentially requiring removal of select trees), and woodland.

LAKE KITTAMAQUUNDI AND LAKEFRONT

Insert text in future draft describing existing character and potential enhancements to the Lake and Lakefront area.

PROMENADE

A promenade is an extended walkway, more prominent and frequently wider than a sidewalk, that accommodates significant pedestrian movements and provides a formal connection between important destinations. A promenade may be used as a setting for planned events such as festivals. It is typically composed mostly of hardscape (walkways, steps, ramps, and walls), often lined with trees and other landscaping, lighting and benches, and may include public art.

Promenades reinforce key pedestrian corridors. A pedestrian promenade should link the east entrance of the Mall to the Lakefront, and the existing promenade at the Lake should be enhanced and extended to the north and south. A promenade should be created to link the south entrance of the Mall to Symphony Woods.

NATURAL AREAS

Natural Areas are open space areas reserved for the protection and enhancement of environmental resources including lakes, streams, wetlands, buffers, woodlands, steep slopes, floodplain and similar environmentally sensitive land that often connects to other open space.

Although the landscape is naturalistic, some management and maintenance is typically required. Certain areas may be conducive to informal recreation such as hiking and biking trails that link the natural areas to other portions of the Columbia open space network. Edges of the natural areas may be suitable for limited active recreation and parks. The largest and most significant natural area in Downtown includes the Little Patuxent River and Lake Kittamaqundi.

All natural areas in the Warfield Triangle and Lakefront / Little Patuxent Parkway districts have already been incorporated into the Columbia open space system. While no natural areas exist in the Corporate Boulevard District, The Crescent / Symphony Woods district has several tributary streams, wetlands, floodplain areas and associated woodlands that must be protected from development. These natural areas shall be incorporated into the Columbia open space system.

URBAN AMENITY AREAS: GREENS AND PLAZAS

A green is a small, urban space available for public use and enjoyment. Greens are typically, but not required to be, defined by building frontages and /or streets. Greens are predominantly planted spaces that also include walks and other paved surfaces. Greens, whether formal or informal in their designs, help create a distinctive identity for each district.

A plaza is an urban space, typically at the intersection of important streets, between buildings along a street or sidewalk and / or at the junction of important commercial and civic buildings. It is typically, but not required to be, circumscribed by building frontages.

Within the districts, the greens and plazas should expand the public realm and create focal points for public gathering. Opportunities to locate greens and / or plazas may include the following:

1. Where retail areas are concentrated along sidewalks and promenades that connect to the Mall, as at LL Bean Plaza.
2. Along Corporate Boulevard as a gathering place for lunchtime and perhaps evening use.
3. Bordering Wincopin Street to expand the public realm and accommodate outdoor activities.
4. Along the Lakefront plaza and promenade, when new buildings are added or when existing plazas need enhancement or renovation.
5. To mark the entrance to office buildings on Corporate Boulevard or to residential buildings in other districts.
6. At civic, cultural, and signature buildings that are focal points or major public attractions.

PATHS

Pathways for pedestrians, cyclists and skaters provide connections among important destinations and should be an integral part of open spaces. Paths are typically fitted to the natural character of the site or to the urban context, and are often constructed with such materials as concrete, asphalt, mulch, and boardwalks (for spanning waterways and environmental areas). Paths should be designed for their intended use and intensity of use, including consideration for safety. If appropriate, they may include lighting, benches, and drinking fountains.

The Open Space Plan depicts paths throughout Symphony Woods that provide better access to the Merriweather Post Pavilion and connect the park to The Crescent, Lake Kittamaqundi and adjacent neighborhoods. The plan recommends completing the path around Lake Kittamaqundi or bridging the Lake at No Man is an Island, if appropriate. Other paths are proposed connecting Downtown to adjacent neighborhoods, to Wilde Lake and its Village Center, to Howard

Community College, and to Oakland Mills. Both enhancing the bridge over US 29 and improving the pathway approaches to the bridge are important to creating an attractive and inviting connection to the nearby Oakland Mills community and its Village Center.

SPECIAL SITES

Special sites are designated locations for cultural, civic, and signature buildings. Many of these sites terminate a street or important vista or are located at key intersections. Their location and significance makes them appropriate locations for small urban spaces with, perhaps, public art. Where civic or cultural uses occupy these buildings, outdoor spaces for public gatherings should be provided. The outdoor spaces, as well as the buildings, should be designed as focal points within the Downtown.

OPEN SPACE TYPES



Lake Kittamaquidi / Lakefront (plazas, greens, promenade, paths)



Symphony Woods (natural areas, recreation, promenade, paths)

OPEN SPACE TYPES



Promenade (along a waterfront)



Promenade (along a street)



Natural Area (streams, woodlands)



Paths (in parks and natural areas)



Urban Amenity Areas (plazas and green, both formal or informal)



SECTION 7: ARCHITECTURE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Architectural Design Guidelines offer general principles to consider in the design of buildings. They are not intended to prescribe any style, but to allow progressive, forward-looking design. As in other American downtowns that have evolved over time, buildings are expected to have a richness and diversity of architectural expression. Although the Vision Plan embraces New Urbanism in its planning vocabulary and many of its architectural images, designers are encouraged to also recognize the modernist spirit that pervaded the initial development of Columbia and its evolution to the County's urban center. In recognition of the visionary approach to planning and design that has been a hallmark of Columbia, the Vision Plan encourages designers and developers of Downtown structures to consider new technologies for "Green Building." The State and County offer Green Building Tax Credit for buildings that meet the United States Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Guidelines.

Buildings should be designed to reinforce the distinctly urban character established in the Vision Plan for Downtown. Special focus should be placed on the design of buildings along pedestrian-oriented streets and their contribution to the evolving urban environment of Downtown. Building design may vary significantly among the five districts so that these principles should be adapted to the particular Downtown Development Plan Development Criteria for each district. For example, architectural design for a district with a substantial residential component, such as The Crescent / Symphony Woods, will be different from a district seeking to create a major office address for the Downtown, such as Corporate Boulevard.

The buildings of Downtown will frame and define the streets and public open spaces that comprise the public realm. Buildings will thereby contribute to the quality and character of these public spaces and will help create the activity and street life so important to the vibrancy of Downtown. Buildings cannot all be "signature" buildings and, for the most part, should be reflective of their intended function and respectful of their context. However, special sites at a key intersection or at the terminus of an important vista, for example, have been recognized in the Vision Plan as potential sites for signature, civic or cultural buildings. The design of signature, civic, and cultural buildings may vary from these Guidelines, as approved by the Planning Board.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. BUILDING ORIENTATION

- a. Buildings that face more than one street should front onto the major pedestrian-oriented street.
- b. Buildings facing a Primary Pedestrian Street shall have storefronts at the ground level in areas where retail uses are concentrated. Storefronts shall face the more important street and may turn the corner to receive pedestrian circulation from another street, plaza, parking area or pedestrian way.

- c. Buildings that are located at the edge of districts should take into account their relationship to buildings in adjacent districts, including consideration of compatible building heights and uses.

2. BUILDING MASSING AND ARTICULATION

- a. All buildings greater than 3 stories should have a clearly defined base. Buildings with a base, middle, and top are encouraged.
 - i. The floor heights of the base should have a visual appearance of greater height than other floors.
 - ii. Taller buildings should have a greater number of stories for their base and top and may use expression lines (such as a horizontal band, projecting material, shift in vertical plane, change in building material, or other treatment) to delineate the division between base, middle and top.
- b. Building facades fronting on pedestrian-oriented streets or framing public open spaces shall avoid the appearance of undifferentiated solid walls and should include glazed openings to promote visual interaction between building interiors and street activity.
- c. Variation at the storefront level of Downtown buildings is encouraged. Variation may be achieved by signage, awnings, lighting, or other treatments.
- d. To establish pedestrian-scaled design on the ground floors of larger buildings, use window groupings, material changes, columns or pilasters on the principal facade to accentuate individual storefronts and denote smaller increment building bays.
- e. Buildings that extend horizontally along the street frontage for more than half the length of the block should articulate their upper floors to provide variety and reduce the apparent mass of the building.
- f. Entrances should be clearly recognizable within the facade and receive special articulation within the base or bays in which they occur. Main entrances shall be from the more important thoroughfare or more pedestrian-oriented street. Where appropriate, lobbies should extend through the building to provide direct pedestrian circulation from parking areas or open spaces to the primary thoroughfare.
- g. Corners of buildings that are oriented toward important intersections or public open spaces shall use special articulation, such as a change in fenestration, a change in the height of the base or top, a change in material or other treatment to accentuate their special location.

3. EXTERIOR WALLS

- a. The design of building façades shall contribute to the Downtown's character with varied and articulated treatments. All exposed elevations shall be designed and articulated to a consistent degree. The facades defining or framing the public realm shall create visual interest and be designed to enhance the pedestrian experience. Walls abutting greens and plazas should be designed as front facades.
- b. Materials shall be selected that are durable and appropriate for the scale and context of Downtown. They should be materials that are typically used in the construction of large urban buildings, including high-rise construction.
- c. Walls, arcades, piers, and columns should be stone, cast stone, precast concrete, architectural concrete block, brick, glass, metal or other quality material.
 - i. For residential buildings, quality siding material may be used on upper floors; however, the use of vinyl siding is discouraged.
 - ii. Precast panels should include score lines to suggest units/panels of appropriate scale.

4. ROOFS

- a. Roofs may be pitched or flat.
- b. Roofs may be metal, stone or artificial stone, architectural grade asphalt shingles or “green roofs.”
- c. Rooftop equipment (including elevator equipment, HVAC equipment, etc.) shall be concealed in penthouse structures designed as an integral part of the building or screened with a parapet.
- d. Roof penetrations such as vents, attic ventilators, turbines, flues, etc. shall be placed to limit their visibility from the street and painted to match the color of the roof, except those made of metal, which may be left natural.
- e. Gutters and downspouts should be consistent with the building design and should be painted the color of the adjacent material or galvanized, except copper which shall be permitted to age naturally.

5. DOORS & WINDOWS

- a. Ground floor building openings, including entryway doors and windows, should be compatible within each structure and should reflect a pedestrian scale.
- b. Ground floor windows, particularly for retail uses, should have clear glass. Other windows should have glass with no excessive tinting.
- c. Continuous strip or ribbon glass windows as the predominant façade treatment are not recommended. Glass curtain walls may be components of the building, or used for special articulated corners and entrances.

6. STOREFRONTS

- a. The first floor of all buildings on Primary Pedestrian Streets, especially in areas where retail uses are to be concentrated, shall be designed to accommodate retail, even if they are not initially used for retail purposes.
- b. The design of the storefront shall be appropriate to the scale and architectural design of the building.
- c. The design and construction materials of the ground level storefronts shall be appropriate for a downtown retail street, to help contribute to an active pedestrian-oriented street. Factors that should be considered include:
 - i. How the storefront fits into the architecture of the buildings.
 - ii. Relationship to varying grades along the storefronts and the flexibility to adjust store entries.
 - iii. Visibility of storefronts including clear glass.
 - iv. Sidewalk spaces for outdoor retail displays or dining.
 - v. Sign and logo requirements.
 - vi. The design, materials and colors of awnings or canopies to protect pedestrians and windows.
- d. Storefront, doors, awnings and signage may have some individuality; yet they should have a unified design that contributes to the overall architectural character of the base of the building.
- e. Doors should be recessed a minimum of 3 feet from the face of the building to provide a covered or sheltered entrance to the ground floor retail use. Recessed doors are not needed along arcades or where awnings are located.

7. BUILDING SIGNAGE

- a. All signs must comply with the Howard County Sign Code. Where appropriate, sign guidelines for Columbia, which exceed the limitations found in that Code and which are typically enforced by covenants, should be incorporated into the Downtown Development Plan Development Criteria. Such criteria should be updated, where appropriate, to reflect the intent to create a lively urban character for Downtown urban character and to recognize contemporary materials and practices.
- b. Retail window signs: A single external sign may be applied on the glass window flush with the elevation of each floor level. The sign shall be a maximum height of 24 inches.
- c. Retail awning signs: The vertical drip of an awning may be stenciled with signage that is a maximum height of 8 inches.
- d. Retail wall-mounted signs: A single external blade sign may be hung below the second floor windowsill perpendicular to the building. These signs may extend from the building a maximum of 42 inches and may be a maximum height of 24 inches. Vertical blade signs no greater than 8 feet in height shall be mounted above the storefront perpendicular to the building. These signs may extend from the building a maximum of 42 inches and may extend as high as the window lintels on the top floor.
- e. Signs should be externally lit with decorative visible light sources.
- f. Signs flush with a facade should be designed to be integral with the buildings, have a maximum height of 24 inches and be externally lit.
- g. Roof-mounted signs and signs mounted above the top of a building are prohibited.

ARCHITECTURE



Buildings should have an articulated base and identifiable entrances



Pedestrian scaled architecture at street level is important



New Urbanist, Modern and Green Architecture can coexist in Downtown

